

R marks:

Applicant hereby amends the present application and submits the following remarks in response to the Office action dated August 19, 2003.

Claims 1, 2 and 7-26 remain pending in the application. Of the claims still pending, claims 21-25 have been allowed, and claims 14-16 have been indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1, 2, 7-13, 17-20 and 26 stand rejected based variously on Osborne (US Patent No. 5,614,930), Nimura et al. (US Patent No. 6,203,137) and Taylor et al. (US Patent No. 5,742,303).

By this amendment, applicant has rewritten claims 14, 15 and 16 in independent form, including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 11 and 26 have been amended to depend from amended claim 14 (which the Examiner indicated would be allowable as amended). Claims 9 and 10 depend from amended claim 26. Claims 9-11, 14-16 and 26 thus are understood to be in allowable form.

Regarding the Examiner's stated reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter, applicant agrees with the Examiner's conclusions regarding patentability of the allowed claims, without necessarily agreeing with or acquiescing in the Examiner's reasoning. In particular, applicant believes that the application is allowable because the prior art fails to teach, anticipate or render obvious the invention as claimed, independent of how the invention is paraphrased.

The remaining claims, claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 12, 13 and 17-20 have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicant thus believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance.

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Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

KOLISCH HARTWELL, P.C.



Walter W. Kamstein
Registration No. 35,565
Customer No. 23581
520 S.W. Yamhill Street, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97204
Telephone: (503) 224-6655
Facsimile: (503) 295-6679
Attorney for Applicant

CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to Examiner H. Tran, Group Art Unit 2881, Commissioner for Patents, at facsimile number (703) 872-9318 on November 12, 2003.


Christie A. Doolittle

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